

Sends Letter to Federal Agency Urging Quick Action on Establishing Repair Guidelines for Homes

November 23, 2009

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"Official recognition of the effects of Chinese drywall is a major step forward for Louisiana homeowners," said Rep. Melancon. "Hundreds of families who rebuilt their homes after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are stuck in limbo until federal guidelines for fixing the Chinese drywall problem are established. I urge the CPSC to move quickly to develop those standards, so these Louisiana families will have direction on how to make their homes safe and livable again." *Sends Letter to Federal Agency Urging Quick Action on Establishing Repair Guidelines for Homes*

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Today, Congressman Melancon [sent a letter](#) to the CPSC urging the agency to move quickly with determining remediation standards for homeowners with defective drywall.

In the letter, Congressman Melancon noted that **"in order for these families to begin repairing their homes and lives, specific guidance on identification and remediation is needed. Many of these families have nowhere to go, and their health and safety will remain at risk until the CPSC provides specific standards to identify affected homes and ensure a complete remediation. Additionally, the potential for the federal or state governments to provide rebuilding aid will be delayed until an appropriate standard is established."**

Congressman Melancon continued, **"On behalf of the countless families in Louisiana and in the nation whose lives have been turned upside down by Chinese drywall, I implore**

you to issue complete identification and remediation guidance as soon as possible."

Last week, Congressman Melancon [introduced legislation](#) to aid Louisiana homeowners with defective Chinese drywall in their homes. The Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act would prevent insurance companies from cancelling or failing to renew homeowners' policies as the result of Chinese drywall in the home. The bill would also prevent insurers from changing rates or altering the type or amount of coverage based on problems stemming from Chinese drywall.

The Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act would also protect homeowners' rights to sue their insurance companies if their coverage is dropped because of Chinese drywall problems. The bill defines Chinese drywall as drywall that either originated in or was imported from China from 2004 to 2007, or contains abnormal levels of strontium or sulfur.

Many homeowners have said that defective Chinese drywall in their homes emits sulfur, methane and other fumes that have damaged their homes and pose a serious health risk for residents. Reported health problems include nosebleeds, respiratory ailments, headaches, insomnia, and skin irritation.

Approximately 2,091 homeowners - 372 in Louisiana - have filed Chinese drywall complaints with the Consumer Product Safety Commission. According to the CPSC, 7 million sheets of Chinese drywall were imported between 2000 and 2009 - enough to have built tens of thousands of homes. Some consumer advocates have estimated that the cost of property damage could reach \$3 billion.

The problem could become especially serious in Louisiana, where thousands of new homes were rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina, many using Chinese drywall.

Recently, some insurers have begun cancelling policies for homeowners who report the problem and move to a temporary residence. Citing "vacancy" or "failure to maintain the home in insurable condition" as reasons for cancelling the policies, insurers say they cannot cover homes that are not occupied.

Insurance cancellations could pose a serious problem for homeowners because a lapse in coverage is often a violation of the mortgage contract, and could put the homes in foreclosure. Additionally, homeowners who file insurance claims for Chinese drywall and then lose their coverage could have difficulty obtaining new insurance policies because they are considered to have active problems with their homes.

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